

TO PURCHASE LANDS OF SAC AND FOX INDIANS.

JULY 5, 1842.

Read, and laid upon the table.

Mr. J. C. EDWARDS, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, to which the subject had been referred, submitted the following

REPORT :

*The Committee on Indian Affairs, to which was referred the memorial of the Council and House of Representatives of the Territory of Iowa, calling the attention of Congress to the subject of a further purchase of land from the confederated tribe of Sac and Fox Indians, have had the same under consideration, and make the following report :*

The tract of country in question lies in the southern part of Iowa, and on the north and adjoining the State of Missouri, and includes most of the territory in dispute between Missouri and Iowa. The southern boundary begins on the old Indian boundary line run by John C. Sullivan, in 1816, to designate the lands sold to the Government by the Osage Indians, and now usually called the northern boundary of Missouri, and at a point on said boundary fifty miles west of the Mississippi river, and runs west with said Indian boundary line 80 or 100 miles. The Sac and Fox lands lie north of this boundary, and extend 80 or 100 miles in that direction, widening as they extend north. The whole area of this country is probably equal to 90 square miles.

The character of the Sac and Fox country, like that of much the larger part of the Western country, is represented as being very good. The lands are prairie and timber alternately, conveniently proportioned, and are rich and fertile, and finely watered; well adapted to cultivation and the raising of stock, and capable of sustaining a dense population. The whites are already settling up to the very edge of the Indian country, on every side where the Indian title has been extinguished; and many of the more daring and adventurous are even pressing into the Indian territory itself; so that but little time can elapse, after the Indian title shall have been extinguished, before the whole of this region will be entered and settled by the white population.

The committee is not informed, with certainty, as to the disposition of the Indians to sell. The memorialists say, that, "should the confusion and dissatisfaction heretofore existing among these Indians, in relation to the manner of receiving their annuities, be speedily and amicably adjusted, which, from the present aspect of things, it is thought they will be, and efficient measures are taken by the Government, it is confidently believed that a treaty might soon be made." As the whites are pressing them on all sides—as many of them are actually settling in their territory—as this

contiguity and intermingling must necessarily be disagreeable and annoying to these Indians, and as the game is rapidly disappearing from their country, they would in all probability accept any reasonable proposition to sell. No doubt a wilder country, further west, with more game, where they would have room to roam at large, would suit them better, and be more congenial to their feelings and manners and customs.

The rapid increase in the population of Iowa will be another inducement with these Indians to sell. In a short time, this increase must entitle her to admission into the Union. The Sac and Fox country, except that part in dispute between Missouri and Iowa, will almost necessarily be included in the territory of the latter. If these Indians remain stationary, when Iowa becomes a member of the Confederacy, they will, of course, be made subject to the laws and institutions of the State of Iowa. This would be disagreeable to the Indians; and, no doubt, they anticipate this state of things. To avoid this may be another reason with them to dispose of their lands and remove further west.

The United States should feel a deep interest in extinguishing the Indian title to these lands. It is the duty of this Government to preserve peace between her citizens and the Indian tribes. Located in the very centre of the Territory of Iowa, these Indians are at all times liable to become involved in difficulties with the white inhabitants; and frequent collisions may be expected to occur between them. To prevent these difficulties, it would be wisdom and prudence, and sound policy on the part of this Government, to purchase out these Indians, and to assign them lands further west. The Government would lose nothing, in a pecuniary point of view, by the purchase. As the lands are valuable, and in great demand, they would be settled and sold at once, and the Government would soon be reimbursed in any sum expended in extinguishing the Indian title.

Iowa must feel the deepest interest in the purchase of this territory, and the removal of the Indians beyond her limits. Her growth and future prosperity, and even the peace of her inhabitants, depend much upon the purchase of these lands. They embrace the very heart of the country and much of the very best soil of the territory. The State of Missouri, too, feels deeply interested in this purchase. The Indians inhabiting this region of country are in her immediate neighborhood; and, after killing up the game in their own country, they often come over into the State of Missouri, in large hunting parties, and alarm the inhabitants, kill up the stock, and not unfrequently create serious difficulties between themselves and the whites. The northern boundary of Missouri, by the removal of these Indians, would be relieved of all difficulties of this character, and the State would thus participate in the advantages resulting from this purchase. Besides this, the disputed territory (a strip of country eight or ten miles in width, claimed by Missouri as well as Iowa) runs the whole length of this country from east to west; and, in consequence, both Missouri and Iowa feel an interest in having the title to this strip of country extinguished.

If but a part of this country should be purchased at this time, the propriety of purchasing the part north of the Des Moines river has been suggested. The memorialists, however, prefer that, no matter what portion of the country may be now purchased, it should run from one side of the territory to the other. On this point, the committee see no reason why

the prayer of the petitioners should not be granted, unless it be the controversy about the boundary between Missouri and Iowa.

As the question of the boundary between the State and Territory remains unsettled, it will be well not to increase the difficulties till a proper adjustment of that question, when it can be well avoided. As before stated, the strip of territory in dispute is eight or ten miles in width, and extends the whole length of the country owned by the Sac and Fox tribe of Indians. Already a portion of the disputed territory, twenty or thirty miles in length, and eight or ten miles in breadth, has been settled by the whites, and embraces several hundred inhabitants. The settlement of this disputed territory increases the difficulty of adjusting this boundary question. Your committee are therefore of opinion, that if any portion of the Sac and Fox lands be not now purchased, that portion not purchased should include the strip of disputed territory. But your committee would recommend the purchase of the whole country; and with that view they offer the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the title of the Sac and Fox Indians to lands in the Territory of Iowa, and in the territory in dispute between the State of Missouri and the Territory of Iowa, ought to be purchased by the Government, and that the President of the United States be requested, at as early a day as practicable, to ascertain and report to this House whether the said Indians have any disposition to cede the said lands to this Government.

